

The Colloquium Series on Leadership in the Department of
Political Science, The Ohio State University, and the
Mershon Center present:

RICHARD J. SAMUELS

Ford International Professor of Political Science and
Director, Center for International Studies
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

The Odd Couple: Leaders in Italian and Japanese History

Tuesday, October 19, 2004
3:30-5:00 PM
Spencer Room
(Room 2130 Derby Hall)
Reception to Follow

An excerpt from Richard J. Samuels, *Machiavelli's Children: Leaders and their Legacies in Italy and Japan*, Cornell University Press 2003, p. 2:

In this book, I conceive of leaders as political actors who have a greater range of assets than others in the community for “stretching” the constraints of geography and natural resources, institutional legacies and international location. This book uses dozens of episodes from Italian and Japanese history to show what difference individuals can make.... Here we can show how even under the same constraints, different leaders can choose—and choose differently. Some use history, or invent a usable history. Others create alliances where none ought to have existed or were even perceived as possible. Some find new, more effective ways to compel or deter rivals. We shall learn that choices can be constructed from a range of often-contradictory possibilities—each legitimate in its own context, but none predetermined. We shall see how individual agents use and even perturb the inertia of great forces. We shall examine how individuals often nudge political trajectories in new and unexpected directions. Some read from the scripts they are given, others write their own, and still others ad lib. In short, we will take choice and creativity seriously in our account of change. And in so doing, we will revalidate notions of individual responsibility and accountability—a normative lesson of transcendent importance for the continued health of the body politic.

Machiavelli's Children won the Jervis-Schroeder Prize given by the American Political Science Association.